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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 008073

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SES-O  
STATE FOR S/CT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/17/2015

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IN](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: J&K ATTACK WILL DEEPEN GOI ANGER OVER TERRORISM  
FROM PAKISTAN

REF: A. NEW DELHI 8012  
[B](#). NEW DELHI 7990  
[C](#). NEW DELHI 7803  
[D](#). NEW DELHI 7795  
[E](#). NEW DELHI 7794

Classified By: Charge Robert Blake, Jr. for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Terrorists affiliated with Pakistan-based al-Mansoorian (a front name used by Lashkar-e-Tayyiba) on October 18 conducted a daytime suicide attack on a secure residential compound in Srinagar, killing the J&K Education Minister and two security personnel. This attack appears designed to be a dramatic statement that the October 8 earthquake did not disrupt cross-border terrorist operations, and not a targeted assassination. It follows a series of large infiltration bids and dramatic attacks that followed the earthquake, and it will further harden GOI skeptics who do not believe that Islamabad is taking serious action against Kashmir-oriented terrorism. This cable also contains suggested press guidance condemning the attack, which we view as particularly heinous given the backdrop of continuing earthquake-related relief and reconstruction. End Summary.

Terrorists Sought an Easy Target  
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[1](#)2. (C) According to our police sources in Srinagar and Indian press reports, two terrorists wearing police uniforms attacked Tulsi Bagh, a secure residential zone for VIPs in Srinagar, killing J&K State Minister for Education Dr. Ghulam Nabi Lone, as well as a Central Reserve Police Force officer and a J&K police officer. One terrorist was also killed; the other was last reported hiding within the secure zone. The Srinagar government declared October 18 a day of mourning, but added that relief efforts would not be interrupted. Al-Mansoorian, a front for FTO Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, claimed responsibility for the attack.

[1](#)3. (C) It appears that the terrorists did not single out Lone as their target. According to J&K media, they first tried to enter the home of Communist Party of India (Marxist) state legislator and longtime Embassy contact Yusuf Tarigami; Tarigami's personal security officer (a deputed J&K police officer) shot and killed one terrorist and was himself killed. The surviving terrorist then entered Lone's residence (apparently unopposed) and shot Lone, who was at the time meeting with constituents. Lone was taken to a nearby hospital but pronounced dead on arrival. The series of events suggests that the terrorists sought to conduct a dramatic daytime attack inside the secure zone, but were flexible regarding their choice of a victim. We have subsequently offered our condolences to Tarigami, who underlined the importance of a swift condemnation of the attack.

Infiltration, Attacks Ramping Up Despite Quake Damage  
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[1](#)4. (C) There is a noticeable uptick in the pace of reported terrorist activity (i.e. infiltration and attacks) following the October 8 Kashmir earthquake. Indian security forces have intercepted several large infiltration parties in the past ten days. Terrorists are undoubtedly crossing the border before the snow (which has already begun to fall) makes many infiltration routes impassable. Within the next 3-5 weeks infiltration numbers should drop dramatically as the passes close.

[1](#)5. (C) The surge in dramatic attacks may be linked to press reporting on the number of terrorist casualties in Pakistani Kashmir and the extent of damage to terrorist infrastructure from the October 8 earthquake. The Srinagar attack is a glaring message that terrorist groups targeting Kashmiris retain their capacity to conduct raids on hard targets despite media speculation that thousands of terrorists may have been killed by the quake (Refs B and C).

"Confirms" to Skeptics That GOP Not Serious on Kashmir CT  
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[1](#)6. (C) This attack will confirm suspicions within the GOI,

from NSA Narayanan on down, that -- our own statements notwithstanding -- nothing has changed on the ground regarding cross-border terrorism (Refs A-E). The PM should be able to keep Indo-Pak rapprochement on track, but the goodwill generated by anecdotal cross-border cooperation in the aftermath of the quake greatly erodes with each terrorist incident.

Comment: Swift and Strong Condemnation

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17. (U) This attack is particularly heinous given the enormity of ongoing earthquake relief and reconstruction efforts on both sides of the LoC. Post recommends Department strongly condemn this attack, and offers the following suggested press guidance:

Begin suggested press guidance:

"We strongly condemn the October 18 terrorist attack in Srinagar and extend our deepest condolences to the families of the victims. No attack on unarmed civilians is justified. This attack was particularly reprehensible, given the magnitude of human suffering caused by the October 8 earthquake and the massive relief and reconstruction efforts that remain. We support Indian counter-terrorism efforts to protect its citizens, and to enhance peace and security in Jammu and Kashmir."

End suggested press guidance.

BLAKE